

RECORD

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'WE'RE SIMPLY A GUITAR BAND'

True West fights off psychedelia and other categories

SUNNY PRODUCTIONS PRESENT



LOS ANGELES—Backstage at the Music

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BRING OUT YOUR DEAD RECORDS RECORDING ARTISTS

true west



NOVEMBER 18, 1983/BAM



Russ Tolman of True West has always been a big Television fan, but when he and the band were told at their Danceteria show in New York that former leader Tom Verlaine might show up to see them, they were skeptical: why would Verlaine be interested in them, after all? As it turns out, Verlaine has been a fan of theirs since the release of the first True West single. Not only did he show up at the gig, he offered to produce their next record! True West, of course, is not passing the opportunity up, and will be recording under Verlaine's guidance at Todd Rundgren's studio in Bearsville, New York towards the end of this year.

One of our SF spies reports that the Sisters of Mercy lead singer Andrew was also enthralled by True West, who opened for them at their recent I Beam show; he was glued to the stage during their entire set. Also spotted at the show was Tolman's former bandmate, Dream Syndicate's Steve Wynn.

Rolling Stone

A young band from California, True West knows how to attract attention: They made sure their 1983 EP, *True West*, didn't go unnoticed by calling their label Bring Out Your Dead Records. And when they issued their debut single, a shrieking, acid-guitar romp through Pink Floyd's "Lucifer Sam," in November 1982, the band turned some heads by putting the same song on the B side—backward. "We've had to work a lot harder to get noticed," says guitarist Russ Tolman, 25, "not only because we're an American band, but because we come from the middle of the tomato fields."

Hailing from the small college town of Davis, True West (Tolman, singer Gavin Blair, guitarist Richard McGrath, and new recruits Kevin Staydohar on bass and Steve Packenham on drums) takes its name from the Sam Shepard play. But their sound—colliding metallic guitars, galloping rhythms and Blair's brooding vocals—has more to do with the Wild West of the Sixties.

True West's alliance with Los Angeles' neopsychedelic "paisley underground" dates back to 1979, when Tolman and Blair played in a Davis band called the Suspects, with Steve Wynn of the Dream Syndicate. But Tolman claims the band's upcoming album, to be produced by Tom Verlaine, won't be half as psychedelic. "After all, you can only write so many one-chord drone songs."

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